

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A laces tying device for tying the ends of a lace having two ends of the lace being threaded into a structure, the structure having an outer surface with opposing portions extending along an longitudinal axis of the structure such that opposing portions of the structure are urged toward the axis when the lace ends are pulled, the device comprising: a body provided with one or more apertures in an outer surface thereof adapted to receive the two ends of the lace in the one or more apertures of the body, the apertures extending in a direction generally perpendicular to said opposing portions; a releasable fastening means adapted to fasten the two ends of the lace in the one or more apertures; and clip means comprising a retaining arm mounted on the outer surface of the body such that it extends in parallel with the longitudinal axis~~in use~~, by a hinge with a spring acting around a hinge pin provided on the outer surface of the body, the hinge configured to bias the retaining arm towards the outer surface of the body and over the aperture in the outer surface of the body, the retaining arm being arranged to retain overlapping portions of the two ends of the lace between the retaining arm and the outer surface of the body over the one or more apertures in the body.

2. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 1, in which the one or more apertures are intersected by a passage, the readily releasable fastening means comprising a spring-loaded clamping element.

3. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 2, in which the clamping element is provided with one or more apertures provided in the body.

4. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 3, in which the clamping element is biased in one direction of displacement so that the one or more apertures provided in the clamping element are normally out of alignment with the one or more apertures provided in the body.

5. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 4, in which the clamping element is provided with a trigger, the operation of which displaces the clamping element to bring the one or more apertures provided in the clamping element into alignment with the one or more apertures provided in the body.

6. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 1, in which two apertures are provided in the body, through which the opposite ends of the lace can be threaded.

7. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 6, in which the retaining arm is provided with lace-engaging elements on its underside.

8. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 7, in which the lace engaging elements comprise elongate projections.

9. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 8, in which six elongate projections are provided.

10. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 9, in which the elongate projections extend

from the underside of the arm towards the hinge at an angle of less than 90 degrees.

11. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 7, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

12. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 11, in which lace engaging elements are provided in the body are formed by a roughened or corrugated surface portion.

13. (previously presented) A laces tying device according to claim 1, further provided with a display portion.

14. (previously presented) A laces tying device according to claim 13, in which the display portion is adapted to display any one of a number of selectable display elements.

15. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 1, in which the tying device is dimensioned for use with footwear provided with laces.

16. (previously presented) An article provided with a fastening using laces and further provided with a laces tying device according to claim 1.

17. (currently amended) A method of using a laces tying device according to claim 1, the method including the steps of:

(a) operating the releasable fastening means and threading the two opposite ends of the lace through the one or

more body apertures in the outer surface, then applying the fastening means to fasten the ends of the lace;

(b) arranging the lace ends extending from the one or more body apertures in the outer surface of the body parallel to one another;

(c) overlapping the lace ends at a point approximately half way along their lengths;

(d) opening the clip means and placing the point of overlap of the lace ends under the retaining arm; and

(e) closing the retaining arm over the one or more apertures in the outer surface of the body onto the point of overlap of the laces.

18. (previously presented) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 8, in which lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

19. (previously presented) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 9, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

20. (previously presented) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 10, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.